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Message Text

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43
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
---------- 081194
O 091733Z MAY 75
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9230
INFO AMEMBASSY MANILA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T PARIS 11754

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: APER, SREF, VS, FR
SUBJECT: AMERICANS IN VIETNAM

REF: STATE 108276

1. QUAI ACTING DIRECTOR FOR ASIA BOLLE TOLD EMBOFF MAY 9 FRENCH AMBASSADOR MERILLON HAD REPORTED THAT, ACCORDING TO RUMORS, THERE WERE UP TO 100 AMERICAN CITIZENS IN THE SAIGON AREA. MERILLON SAID THAT THE EMBASSY KNEW OF THE PRESENCE IN SAIGON OF 27 AMERICANS AND THAT THEY WERE SAFE AND SOUND. MERILLON INDICATED THAT THE 17 AMERICANS ON THE "REUTERS LIST" (WHICH MERILLON SAID WAS GIVEN TO HIM BY "AN AMERICAN") WERE AMONG THOSE KNOWN TO THE EMBASSY. MERILLON WAS ADAMANT THAT THE QUAI NOT RELEASE THIS LIST AS SUCH TO THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND THAT NO STATEMENT SHOULD BE MADE BY THE AMERICANS WHICH INDICATED FRENCH HAD COMMUNICATED INFORMATION EVEN OF A GENERAL NATURE TO USG CONCERNING AMERICANS IN SOUTH VIETNAM. BOLLE SAID HE HAD TO UNDERLINE THAT IT WOULD BE A CATASTROPHE FOR THE GOF AND FOR THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN SAIGON IF INFORMATION CONCERNING ANY FRENCH ROLE VIS-A-VIS AMERICANS WERE TO LEAK TO THE PRESS.

2. BOLLE SUGGESTED THAT EMBOFF GO TO THE QUAI WITH A
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USG PREPARED LIST OF AMERICANS IN SVN, AND BOLLE WOULD

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BE WILLING TO INDICATE BY NAME WHICH PERSONS WERE KNOWN BY THE FRENCH TO BE SAFE. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THIS INFORMATION SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE ONLY TO REASSURE THE NEXT OF KIN AND THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO REPEAT NO PUBLICATION OF THE REASSURANCE OR THE FRENCH SOURCE.

3. COMMENT: QUAI POSITION HAS APPARENTLY BEEN TAKEN AT A HIGH LEVEL WITH FULL CONSIDERATION FOR THE U.S. HUMANITARIAN CONCERNS. UNTIL THE SITUATION IN SAIGON IS MORE CLEAR, FRENCH WISH TO BE VERY CAREFUL ABOUT ANY COMPROMISE OF THEIR EMBASSY'S ACTIVITIES IN SVN. IF REUTERS HAS A LIST, DEPARTMENT CAN PRESUMABLY REASSURE NOK THAT ACCORDING TO FRENCH EMBASSY THESE PERSONS ARE SAFE. IF REUTERS MERELY HAS THE STORY THAT THE LIST WAS PRESENTED TO THE FRENCH EMBASSY, REUTERS SHOULD BE URGED NOT TO PUBLISH;OTHERWISE EVEN THE LIMITED COOPERATION QUAI IS PREPARED TO GIVE (PARA 2) MAY BE JEOPARDIZED. REUTERS WOULD PRESUMABLY HAVE TO REPORT THAT IT FURNISHED THE LIST, BUT GOF REFUSED TO RELEASE IT TO THE USG.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: IF IT IS POSSIBLE TO COMPILE AN INCLUSIVE LIST OF AMERICANS CONSIDERED TO BE IN THE SAIGON AREA, WE BELIEVE THAT BOLLE WILL BE ABLE TO PROVIDE CONFIRMATION CONCERNING MOST OF THE 27 AMERICANS KNOWN TO BE SAFE BY THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN SAIGON.
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